

CURRENTS THAT PUNCTURE

A Dissertation
Presented to
The College of Arts and Sciences
Drake University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Arts

by
Joyce Daniels-Jungmann
July 1988

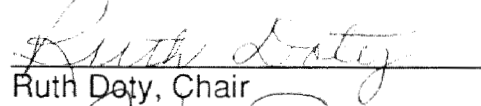
100
100

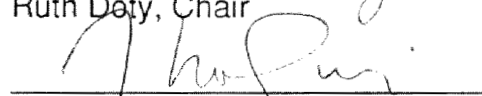
CURRENTS THAT PUNCTURE

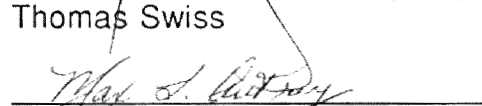
by

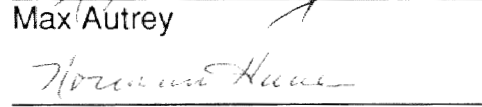
Joyce Daniels-Jungmann


Approved by the Committee:

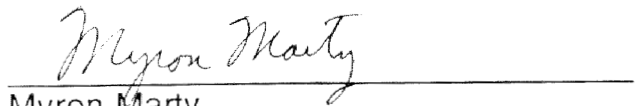

Ruth Doty, Chair


Thomas Swiss


Max Autrey


Norman Hane


Kenneth Miller


Myron Marty
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

CURRENTS THAT PUNCTURE

An abstract of a Creative Dissertation by
Joyce Daniels-Jungmann
July 1988
Drake University
Advisor: Ruth Doty

Currents That Puncture is a poetic response to my personal experiences and study of literature over the past two years. My writing of poetry began as a means of understanding my childhood, adolescence and adult self. Thus, the persona of each poem is experiencing a process of self discovery.

While the majority of the poems are written in free verse, the volume also mirrors my study of poetic form. Included are, what began as: three sonnets, one sestina, and one ghazal. All the poems, but the ghazal, reflect a divergence from traditional structure and/or rhyme scheme. Although knowledge of standardized poetic form has been beneficial to me as a poet, the importance of freedom from such restraints allows for freer innovative expression.

Several of the poems contain allusions to literary works. This associative response became a natural extension of my creative process as I read and wrote throughout my graduate work. Often, I wished to actively respond to particular pieces of literature beyond the role of a reader. These associations became an integral part of the shaping of the works themselves.

The poems are intended to be read as self-contained units, with images and sounds expressing particular moments of time and feeling. If there is a sequential order, it is based upon levels of developing awareness of emotional and psychological states, rather than upon a chronological movement. The volume is divided into five sections; each section exemplifies a different psychological state. Thus, each poem reflects the persona's recursive inward to outward exploration and growth.

WRAPS

She sits alone wrapped in her green coat
Like an eagle writhing to burst it's shell
Fearful as she gazes into her cup
Half hidden by the shadows of the night
The girl like the artist is aware of the darkness behind her
He has painted the picture window ominous
Making her figure small before it
She poses knowing his purpose
But unwilling to turn to the void

Though the blackened window reflects a pathway of lights
The girl waits yet unable to shed her wrap

A Message for Hemingway

I painted your house once you know
Standing on your sidewalk
Looking at the plantains
the hibiscus in pale bloom
Smelling the lushness
mixed with the salt air
Capturing your spooled steps
in shades of grey
You didn't see me of course
How could you? You weren't there
but then neither was I
Painting your house the one
with the tiered front porch
as the aged wicker rocker
whispered in the breeze
I stroked the canvas
thinking of Brett of her failed dreams
Catching the scrubs with touches
of ochre and cadmium red
But the windows I could never
get the windows
They became lost within the
viridian shutters
Now that painting hangs not at my home

but over my Mother's quilt-covered bed
Hanging between the dark wooden
fork and spoon from Mexico
near the gold and black tapestry
brought from Greece
the one with the stag eating
Secure in its place miles from the Keys
At home among the fields of corn
with an existence now all its own

Video Game Escape: A Mechanical Sonnet

A dead screen reflects in the ceiling light
Gaudy in paint with red yellow galaxies
Shades of piercing laser beams Darth Vader fright
Yet the box peers out in perplexity
The room too sits expectant awaiting something
A single poinsettia holding on to her blossoms
Wrapped in green foil tied in pale pink
Appears aged yet ageless in her grip Solemn
In her faded headdress A quarter drops
Then a second bringing breath as the screen
Becomes a myriad of empyreal eyes
Alive now too holding on to a scheme
The player unaware of the others in the cafe
Maneuvers the knobs and loses herself in the game

TIDES IN RETROSPECT

On that bouldered coast where tides inhale and exhale like a
vomiting child

Dropping its bowels among chiselled copper crevices

We leaped the crags as gulls swooped for eel

Feeling the pall of earth breathing our depths of immaturity

While our children explored the sea with its seizures

Amid greys blues corals and shadows

Years before we lived southward where seas flowed

Like one hundred pound tortoises hauled in from waters

We devouring one-clawed lobsters netted in currents that
puncture

As the salt-filled ceiling filtered on our caresses

We laughing at the acts impropriety

While that forgotten other slept in silence like a displaced
northern teal

On days when Pelicans swarmed the fishing boat's keel

I felt the heat of hook plunge within tallow

as you pulled in Jewfish Mackerel and Wahoo

The thirty-five millimeter flashed wild

while the captain maneuvered to shore touched by snowbirds in
reverence

As though he were an esthetic Jaine sweeping his path in
composure

The handprint factory smelled of perfumed oils in tincture
As the Conch train slithered methodically as a lipid sea seal
Bearing tourists like Erendira's entourage in vicarious vices
With the tatooed white whale in comfort on pillows
Brown boys peddling their shells hiding their bile
The Regge beating its Jamaican rhythm while flesh burnt to purity

We saw Hemingway's stilt-house set in quiet simplicity
Rotting through ages by exposure
Surrounded by the sea sitting languid unriled
Spending our days showing sights like an old-fashioned newsreel
As if we were the church elders and they the hallowed
I taking my place behind the pews waiting for my cue at the
service

Starred nights we walked the beach viewing blemishes
Smelling the rankness of the tide's droppings
My wish now to recall those times of mellow
To envision the young girl who stood delayed as in a stilled-shot
feature
Not fervent to escape the bonds of youth that sealed
The film in its grey cannister marked Dead Filed

As insipid seas flow I now stand among chiselled copper crevices

Inhaling the currents that puncture no longer as a northern teal
Nor sitting languid unriled but pushing for flesh burnt to purity

COREA, ME., SHADOWS

Remember that shingled cottage greyed with salt
where the flag swayed in early light
and the aged Ben Franklin

simmered with the coals of driftwood
We filling the twin pine
rockers unaware of their untold tales

As the Atlantic roared its pleasure
Conquering the mountainous boulders in triumph
like a Dali figure balancing the sea on his knee

The journey to Frankenstein's department store
maneuvered that day bringing bewilderment
as we viewed the tiny five and ten

The shopping center promised denied
like Madeline's vision come alive
on St. Agnes Eve

Silencing
as Angela's antique face Dusty

like memories forgotten in the darkness

of the attic without forgiveness

THE GALLERY VISIT

We don't allow no sketching he said

That's OK I'm going to write a poem

I laughed

How funny that he should think I could draw

Me walking these white walled halls

Searching for inspiration

Only to find ropes hung

I sit across from a photograph

Of disjointed female torsos

Mannequins used as symbols

To show the human condition

A head divided symmetrically with masking tape

One leg bent at the knee

Another half-face laughing like a Renaissance mask

Lies near the outstretched foot

No unity in the black and white image

Cross-legged I relax on the oak hardwood floor

Directing my gaze from the photo entitled "Mothers"

That hangs near by

Two stark faces

With sand at their feet

And storm clouds in the sky
While the man in the navy blue blazer
Paces by nervously checking my progress

TERRORS

Green angry seas
surround sailing ships
As towered skies watch
the black man who moans
at the sight of the naked flesh
that floats just inches from the whale's jaws
As helping hands reach for the body
and resolved eyes open skyward

Aphrodite on moon craters
Eyes blank
Solemn lips on a perfume bottle
Birds captive within a squirrel-infested tree
One wing escaping
Another filters from the cracked bark
As a shadow crosses
Like a teardrop
No longer coming from an eye

A boulevard of people
Mass the ancient street
Visible yet fused in oneness
Like a field of wild flowers
Carelessly scattered

With only one willow
Pushing upward to the
Clear clouded blueness

Ophelia lies in the brown creek bottom
Her dress like a lily pod on the pond
The arrested message in her face
of the past
As nearby a man in the red velvet suit
holds strawberries out to the young
brown-haired girl who
smiles Her hands outstretched
cupped for their gift
As another man with an ax
Begins his first cut
Of the youthful maple at their rear
And nearby rocks
in greys and blacks
reflect their silhouettes

THREE FEMALES IN ART

I often wonder what the curator thinks
when placing the paintings
on the gallery walls

This day I sit in front of "Nicolle and her Mother"
Their red cheeks pensive
Eyes downcast
The mother's sygian hair in a high bun
upon her head
This painting hangs beside the
Tahitian Gauguin
She too a mother?

Yet...her hands push away
something unforeseen

Two paintings of women
Side by side
The red frame seeming
to repel the gold filigree
with the Polynesian floating arm
bent slightly at the elbow
in the background
Holding

nothing Behind

the naked

woman in crimson

FRAMED IN SILENCE

Mummified figures
Climb numerous multi-directional stairs
Like shadows of Coleridge's opium dream
In this piece of art
Entitled "Relativity"

One couple sits eating
Another twosome stroll
Arms intertwined
Their wrapped feet inches from the ground
Like Dali's wife Gala
Suspended above her chair
The figures faceless
In their tightly enclosed humanity

My eyes fix upon
One lone figure
Who stands
Two steps from the top
Held in abeyance
Unable to continue
Hanging her head
As if Escher has had her released

Her outstretched hand
Grasps the railing
Like the grip of a child's fat pink fingers
Digging into her father's flannelled arm
At a Halloween haunted house

Mutations
Framed in silence
Within this surreal world
Of the artist

DRUNK WITH FREEDOM

There they are
The shadowed female children
Dancing
Within the uncouth grove of trees
Not a vision at all
But reality
While diabolical hands
Force the dulled eyes of the child
To sleep on the boulder
As the encircling dancers
Beat their soles
In discorded rhythm

The blindfolded streetwalker is led
By the muscular boar on a lease
The magnificent gold and blue bow hangs
Under the ladies' painted breasts
Her black stockings reach for her thighs
As silver heels
Trimmed in pale pink shimmer
And angels fly above her hair
She seemingly content to be led
I wondering what Crane's Maggie

Would have aspired to
If she had had such guidance

My mind wanders
To a time of primordial purity
When flesh stretched skyward
And women trekked to the hand-dug wells for their water
Among the impersonal mountains
Those women attuned to the angelic face of the visionary
Who hovered silent
With the lamb and dog at his feet

The daydreamer sits in a tree
A white morning glory
Drooping from her browned skin
Looking down from her perch
Well hidden among the thickness
Of the pygmy leaves
Brushed in pastel and black chalk
Unwilling to expose herself
Unlike the red-eyed Thracian girl
Sighing at the severed head
Of Orpheus on his lyre
When March plantings sprouted
Out of hollow-eyed girls
And Judith's neck was imprisoned
In emerald's diamonds and gold

UPPER IMAGES

A naked woman
with child at her knee
smiles as one man angrily breaks through a grey eggshell
resting on a white sheet

Teardrops seep inward
as a pale rose kisses the plate
near the partially eaten phone
While snakes touched with rust
and horses rein from
an unknown darkness

A sad hairy man
explodes through lion enfaced rocks
behind the woman allowing
Red white and tanned beginnings
as young faces watch intently
and a rubber mask of Emerson
suspends like a parade balloon
making sport of the world below

NANCY'S WOODCUT

("The voice is much diviner then anything you have
seen of her...") George Eliot

Nancy's face penetrates the paintings
Solemn one eye curiously
larger Dine's only female subject
etched in blacks greys pale
rose always with that single
eye seeming to perceive more

She must have sat for him for hours
In Paris in the Holy Land at 12 Rue Jacob
Then I stood before the woodcut
What did she think when she saw it
to be forever framed?

The artist applying his final touches
Using his electric tool
Working painstakingly
to show the world his genius
Drilling while she brewed his tea made his bed
Calling her in as he stood back in triumph
Nancy come see It's finished

She wiping the soap from her

hands snipping the dead
leaves from the geraniums on the
sill carrying the dishcloth with her
How she must have stood and viewed her
image in the five foot expanse of
wood How he had captured her fine cheek
bones chiselled her long nose
the eye staring
back Silently taking in his
art Her vision entering her
slowly Stepping one foot
closer the towel careening to the
floor as she saw how
carefully he had done his
work How the throat had been carved
away the voice box now
missing the wood chips scattered
on the floor

Stooping she swept each tiny particle
into her palm then turned and
left the room

III

TO MY DAUGHTER

You bought me the delicate chain
and pearl

Then

lunch at Kaplans

Speaking of the future

Later watching M-TV

as you braided my hair

A walk

A car trip to a place where

you spend a portion of your life

Laughing over the man who took our breath away

Then

Listening to a painful phone call

Speaking together of how

your brother must pull through

on his own

Pacing

Praying that he can do it

Before you drove away in the dark

I caressing the chain at my neck

DRAWING IN CHARCOAL

Sitting

propped up in bed

I look at the charcoal drawing

The one I sketched of the exotic model

I view the muscular torso

The outstretched legs

her arms draped over the chair

Its isn't hers of course

that body

This sinewy shape is mine

each tissue drawn taut

Not willowy and at rest as she sat

but posed to push off at any moment

She slept as we drew

The electric heater keeping her warm

As our easels surrounded her throne

Bach played on

While our hands blackened with their work

AFTER SEEING "WAITING ON THE MOON"

Geraldine Stein had an angel
for a friend
Something we all wish we had
But hers was flesh and blood
A genius and an angel
What better combination could be found
than an angel who would say "yes"
and a writer
waiting peacefully
for the moon
to rise
over the trees

BREAKFAST AT MACDONALD'S

The Lamia woman sits
Holding her teeth in her scaly hand
The diluted tissue of her face
Haughty above the Canadian Bacon
Her now read newspaper folds crisp
As she smacks her lips
The tip of her tongue darting outward
To capture the bread crumb
At the corner of her wrinkled mouth
Like a reptile at feeding

This distorted scene from the ancients
Twists my vision
Above my steaming coffee cup
As the aged woman restores her gleaming porcelain
And rises like a goddess
From the booth

A youth
In cotton Pacifics
Brushes her green and brown patterned pants
As she slides slippery
Towards the dumpster with her bag
My eyes follow every movement

As she fills the depths
And glances over her shoulder
At the young Lycius
With the tennis racket
In white shorts
And sweatband
With that dulled twinkle in her eye



SNOW BOMBS

Have you ever noticed
how nature sometimes
tries to get you?
Like after a heavy spring snowstorm
and the trees are laden and
you're trying to have
a peaceful walk in the woods
and the trees drop their bombs
on you and you know they
were meant to scare you but
yet you stay And down deep you
feel that someone up there has
it in for you
Have you ever noticed that?

MARCH GRAVESIDE VISIT

Tyrell Brandsfield Wright

I read as I search for your headstone
unable to find your death place

I recall that autumn day
we met at the graveside
They in their black suits
I feeling the chill of the greetings

You lie now beside your Mother
who at eighty three travelled the seas
carrying her own luggage
unwilling ever to concede

I remember your mulled hand
Fingerless
The one consumed
by the combine
that harvest day

You spending your youth
and manhood in solitude
Unable to extend that hand freely
until the last year of your life

When I picture you now it's in that straw hat
the one with the wide red band
setting smartly on your grey head
Your silver Cadillac pulling into our drive

That last time
you came to say your goodbyes
to the home where I no longer lived
I said I would come
but I couldn't

Yet
I remember
as I sit here among the marble headstones
feeling the cool spring breeze at my back

GHAZAL OF THE NOW

I see the swagger of smoke
as numbed eyes invade mine

I see the conference room door open
and its obese women in black with gold necklace rise

If i could only see the brown man's face
with its protected vision intact fly

I see the tiny spirits of dust obliterate the tiles
as I smell the underlust of droning breath

I want to feel the melodious rhythm
that pollutes the panelling caresses the acoustical ceiling

Ah don't let the risings of a monkish life
bare high upon the cloistered weavings

Leave the philodendron to shelter the Crayola box
and the chalk-lady to draw the door

THE CROSSROADS

Funny I never thought about it before
Iowa has only two highways
and they meet right there

Yeah that's the crossroads
right there in the middle of the corn field
Yeah I never thought about it either

It's like the boy at the wrestling meet
when his arm snapped
the bone pushed out through his flesh
One woman screamed and ran out of the gym
It's kind of like that
Isn't it?

Well maybe it's more like the Raccoon River
as it flows through the state
Remember last summer when it overflowed its banks?
Remember how everyone got nervous
and how the basements flooded
How some people lost everything
because they had built on the flood plain?
Maybe it's more like that

Or maybe it's like that hailstorm

that hit down south

Remember how the hail was the size of a baseball

How it ruined the roofs

and your Mom's siding had holes in it and

the tomato plants were beat to the ground?

Maybe it's more like that

Yeah maybe

Maybe that's the crossroads

how we survive

MANEUVERING THE BIG DIPPER

Last night I dreamed
I was dangling
from the Big Dipper

One hand was secure
the other was reaching
for the next star

I catapulted my body
My hand touched
then lost the twinkling

My body swayed silently

Once more I pushed
and swayed so smoothly
forward

I felt the warmth
as I let go
of the star behind

I caught my breath
viewed the distance

of the next swing
calculated carefully
closed my eyes

And stretched out
My body

Again

THE GREEN THEATRE

With my sandals resting on the painted bench
I remember an earlier time when we sat here
The day I slipped up quietly behind you
embarrassed
You had your shirt off
basking in the hot summer sun
I had no desire or did I?
to see your naked flesh
What did I want?
Snapping the twig
to announce my presence
Knowing that you would understand
and cover yourself
Is this the same bench we sat on that day
discussing your art?
The rows are so deceiving in their sameness
It seems it is
for then too
my legs were uncomfortable as they dangled
unable to touch the ground

What are the two lovers doing in our green theatre?
Embracing as one
Swaying to their music on the oak shaded stage

Unaware that someone watches
as arm in arm they turn
and walk through the wood
Choosing their path in unison
A chance we had
but never took

I turn and watch the four walking
The mother holding the hand of the young child
The boy in the red sweatshirt near her elbow
Fifteen yards ahead strolls the father alone
on this warm spring day

Soon the boy runs to his side
to match his pace
while the mother and daughter walk behind
only paces from the green theatre

THAT NIGHT

Rain was not far away
as we walked Court Avenue
That night
when Baryshnikov
Danced

You dressed in black and white
Your hair swept behind your earlobe
as the dancers did an arabesque in "Don Quixote"
I sitting
mesmerized by the movements

At intermission we walked the carpeted halls
Familiar eyes upon us
as we strolled leisurely toward the auditorium
Speaking of Gray's quest for a perfect moment
in "Swimming to Cambodia"
of Marilyn's part
as we settled ourselves for "Apollo"

You spoke of vapors
that surged through your veins
as I watched the dancers
and their radiance

Lifted me

Then

Slowly

Brought me back

Again

Mikhail

Standing now

You motioned to the stage with your hands clasped

tossing your head like a pinto

Mikhail

That night

At the ballet

As the rain

Slowly fell

On the refurbished umbrella

That leans lazily

By the cooling reflection pool

Yet once that pool too

Could not avoid death

As it inhaled the three year old child

Into its slippery larynx

Like a deep drag on a cigarette

Holding her lovingly
Unwilling to exhale
As if her years of dance
Were a pagan god's sacrifice

Yet she someday too
Will plie' again
Perhaps upon Riga's soil

Oh Mikhail
Mikhail

THE FISH HOOK

The pond is in pandemonium today
Searing robins are angry with the unexpected clime
The water spits at their sweeping dives
While massive snow bombs careen from the trees
Like some mythic pie fight

It wasn't long ago
That it was summer at this arena
And I was searching for the fish hook
Swaying from the sheltering sycamore
Do you see it? He said
No
There There it is Look closely he whispered
I did
For an eternity
And there it was
Just as he knew
So exquisite
Dangling from the transparent line
So tiny
I don't know how he first saw it
Yet he did
And he waited patiently
Until I comprehended it too

That day we watched the young girl on the hill

Crying

Her mate waiting

She squalled so lustily

In her descent

The tears subsiding only when

The goal was near

I perceiving solemnly

As the fish hook netted the breeze

THE PARK POND

How can stagnant water have such a fascination?

We strangers sit on the pond's shore

And stare

into the depths

Each with our own thoughts

like the ancient basket weavers

who squatted in the Arizona cliff dwellings

I know here when summer has arrived

I feel the release

and see the bared flesh as

motorcycles roar by While

summer inhales

then blows

its aroma like the smoke

of the Hobi pipe ritual before

the snake dance

When the coils of venomous flesh

dangled from their mouths

as dancers released their spiritual

powers into the wild

deserts of Pueblo Bonito

And charmed snakes slithered forward

much like the movement of these
muddy waters before us

BLINKING NEON

You stood
That night
Under the park shelter
As rain
Simmered down

Your legs firm
like Tom Buchanan before his glorious house
Your taut back
in shadows

We watched
two white-tailed deer
feeding
in the distance

Your dewed voice
Matched the silence
As you turned to face me
With your denial

While lightening bugs
blinked neon
And I thought of the unattainable

green light

at the end of the pier

THE INTRUSION

Tramping the path
We felt mud suck our toes
As you spoke
Of a fifteen year old girl who
Gave her virginity as a present
In a hayloft
I laughing
While you growled your masculinity
Like a Saint Bernard
Whose territory has been threatened

I recalled that other day at the baseball field
When I had grinned nervously
So long ago
Thinking there had been a home run
Now only to discover
The game was forgotten
While you *expressed your male ambition*
I hesitating as the mud exhaled deeply

Moving forward the path pivoted
As you mentioned friendships
Your belief that a man and a woman can never attain the
Bonding that two men are capable of

I having to stop

When my sandal slipped lonely into the inch deep mire

Bending I tugged for release

As you talked of your career as an artist

I picking up a twisted stick to clean off my sole

Noticing how the twilighted woods behind you

Was like that interrupted dream

I had once as a child

That time

Before I had been awakened

By my red-headed sister

You haunched your shoulders

Like a bull at a rodeo gate

And walked away

Leaving me

Standing

Silently

Working at my task

A SUNDAY AFTER

The world looks less menacing from here
After my climb up the steep grass-covered hill
The pond's water isn't as muddy
From this higher vantage point

I watch the young man
Stroke the curls of his lover on the blanket
As blue bicycles roll down the path
While a cluster of teens
Descend slowly
With rock music in their ears

I feel the swollen bruises of my wound
Begin to fade like two-week old nail polish
As the girl in the red shorts
Saunters confidently toward the footbridge
Like a blonde child holding the sea on her fragile knee

CRACKS OF DECISION

Purples

Golds

Greyed whites

Splintered cracks of decision

After hazed skies

Having passed the corn field

Where the young mother in her car

Caromed to her death

Leaving the boy

In regrets

As the oak-plank floor

Vibrates

And the crowd smacks their hands

Like baseballs hitting an aluminum bat

While the armless blonde child

Smiles in his t-shirt

The white stick of the drooling sucker

Protruding from his lips

CLINGING SNOW

The branches are bare
Heavy snow clings to the northern bark
Like periwinkles sucking chilled boulders of the
ocean's crevices
Soon the snow too will slip to the ground

I watch Noah's Ark truck
leaving the park
It reminds of something
or nothing
Is it that truck that reminds me?
Or am I here because
I want to bring back those days
when I too clung like that snow
Holding on
Not able to let go

The boys run by in grey jogging suit
Hoods up protected from the cold
Running their ten miles a day
Like aberrations of melodies
While I sit here alone in my grey skirt
Alert to their progress

Knowing that I too have been running
since I dropped to the ground

RECONSTRUCTING

Sometimes I remember
And wonder
what it all meant
The nomadic movement of the bike wheels
The talks of the classics
The moments of unspoken feelings
Nothing?

I wonder
As I balance my checkbook
and reconstruct
the eight hundred piece jig saw puzzle
of the female figure

Much like the task of Wetherell who
devoted his life to the ruins of the
sacred Anasashi world
and was shot mysteriously from his horse
on that quiet early morning
in Mesa Verde
so long ago

✓

THE RIDERLESS HORSE

Lying here in the hotel bed
The flowered bedspread crumbled at my feet
I smile at the green and tan picture
Of the horse without a rider
that hangs nearby

My daughter showers
As the Chipmunks sing their strange tune
On the Saturday morning cartoons

This morning
Of the first trip
We take away from my new home

Forever in another state now
As I stretch luxuriously
with my knowledge

The Third Tier

He said the phrase with humor
as I slid by
taking my seat behind

Going to the third tier? He asked
I smiled
thinking about our last meeting
when she joined us

How she drummed the table
Glancing at the time
as we talked beliefs
or lack of

Her dark glasses hiding her eyes
hands exposed

She having bought strawberries
to place gingerly in each glass
Giving one drink to each guest
and
after
cheesecake

While we talked
across the warmed oak table
until the clock struck the appointed hour

MARIA' S WAKING DREAM

The cement penetrates with warming coolness
In Maria's dream
Sprigs of persimmon sprout through cracks
Their tendrils touch her fleshy legs
As she lies silent like a southern chameleon

Hiding in the twilighted openness of the public sidewalk
Watching the lady dancer who fills her vision
Fade in and out with awkward maneuvers
As if blown by a harmonious torrential gale

The black-blue of the dramatic backdrop
Causes the mirage's chalky gown to gleam
As a tiny centipede crawls leisurely
Across Maria's exposed ankle on the percale sheet

She sees the performer balancing
On an elevated seawall
Looking precariously at the sand below
The dancer losing herself in the mist
As a male form stands nearby
Pleading for her to descend And

Maria reaches down in her sleep to

Rub the raised flesh

Then turns her head leisurely on her pillow

Once again

THE DISAPPEARING STRING

I had dreamed the balloons tied to my house
Draped over the chipped paint
Bringing an instant beauty to the exterior

I watched as the man walked several paces
His belly pushing out from his trousers
A cap matching their chalkiness
As his fingers loosened
The molecules of color
Drifting high like a kite's slippery tail
To float over the pregnant pond
Mixing with the heavens

Coming down
On someone else's house
As I
Searched
The tree tops

Once more

KNOW YOUR BUGS

There I was
Standing at the closed door
Viewing this bug poster

Dancing Voltage Monkey Roach
Snoutsucking Sag Worms
Creeping Brownout Fungus Louse I read

Enlarge visions of earth creatures
Their brown-cushioned eyes
protruding tongues
and hairy legs
startle my knowledge
as I realize
that they have crawled over
my prone body
as I have lain in the dew
watching the skylark

This microscopic world
teems tirelessly
unseen
as computers glow
coolly behind doors

DAYS GONE BY

Misty sands
With hooked nosed man
Of smiling eyes
As memories
Of targeted aiming arms
In finality shoot outward
Horned beasts watch
Near the Post Office
And one lone fella
Lies comfortable
On his pallet
As the centipede
Slithers down
And a boy plays mumble-d-peg
While early celebrants hold each other
In abeyance
Near amused citizens
Who sharpen their quilled pens
To capture the scene
As a storyteller squire
Sits on the rotten stump
And begins his tale
Like the opium dreamed
Mariner who held the

Wedding quest's attention

Near the open doorway

In days gone by

MOUNT AYR

Can you imagine being from such a place?
Nestled nowhere
Remote from others
Raised among tractors that endlessly
furrow the rows
To wake up each morning
stretching exquisitely
To look out your window
at the twisted solitary elm
and beyond to perceive the subterranean soil
stretching far to the heavens
Envisioning the mirage at the horizon
knowing the bountiful black earth breathes
Here on your piece of land in Mount Ayr

LAYING SOD

Today they laid the sod
that had stood in clumps of stacked profusion
ready to cover the prepared earth

Stopping for a moment
we watched the men's progress
slow
meticulous
forming cut patterns
within the greened grass
Beside the backdrop
of dark scrubs

Like the bush that you
in your cowboy hat
pulled the sprigs from to
make your point about the here
and now As I smiled
and viewed other workers
over your shoulder
laboring
mysteriously at their greening
task

BLOW IT UP

Two ink spots
in the distance
Transverse the space
as the wayfarer
sits silent
in consternation
and the lone finely-veined hands
droop in hypnotic
alpha state awareness
while the headless poet
looks more like a raft man
gone mad
as the boatman
daydreams into the night of stars

BALLOON DAYS

God's last name isn't damit
Now what kind of thing is that
To put on a cap
Worn by a farmer
Who smiles
Enjoying his joke
As you read it
In the A&W restaurant
While the french fries sizzle in their basket
And the August brushed skies
Sweep their horizons of
Red
Ochre
Blue
And silver
And the heavy wicker baskets
Slowly descend upon the corn fields
Swept in gold
Underlayed in oozing browns

False Jewels

Some speak of fashion shows

Luncheons

A full-length mink

I listen

And wonder

If they hear

Themselves

Or only see

The

Jewels

On their fingers

As they plan

Their next trip

To the slopes

As I finger my earlobes

That are healing

Where the diamonds

Once hung

Reflecting

Theirs

My bared hands

Now folded

On the table

THERE IS MORE LIGHT

I look around the room
the girl in the ponytail
and deep blue sweater
smiles

eyes light up

a key?
lost
found?
where?

somewhere else?
she seems to think not
as she writes furiously

trying to capture
that quiet light

from within